



NEWS RELEASE

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Aug. 7, 2015

Two Convicted of 2010 Christmas Murder

Two gang members were convicted today of the special circumstance murder of a Los Angeles woman fatally shot on Christmas night 2010 in front of her 3-year-old daughter, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Gunman Darnell Houston, 38, and getaway-driver Lamar McKnight, 28, also were convicted of the attempted, premeditated murder of a second victim in case BA388294. After one day of deliberations, jurors also found true gang and gun allegations and a special circumstance allegation that the defendants killed while they were active members of a criminal street.

Deputy District Attorney Antonella Nistorescu of the Hardcore Gang Division prosecuted case.

Houston and McKnight are expected to be sentenced on Sept. 16 in Department 109 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center. Houston and McKnight face a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Codefendant Ezekiel Simon, 20, is awaiting sentencing on Aug. 19. Simon faces 29 years in state prison.

Codefendant Derrick Williams, 20, also is charged in the case with one count each of murder and attempted murder. Jurors are currently deliberating in his case.

Prosecutors said the defendants – documented members of the 111 Neighborhood Crips criminal street gang – went looking for rivals in the area of 85th Street and Western Boulevard in Los Angeles on the night of Dec. 25, 2010.

When the defendants came across a man and a woman standing outside of a car talking, Houston exited the vehicle and ran toward the victims, firing multiple rounds from a handgun. Victim Kashmir James was fatally shot. Her child, who was in the front seat of the car, and the second adult victim were uninjured. The victims were not gang members.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.